AD-A047 751 ARMY INST FOR ADVANCED RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN STUD--ETC F/G 15/7
SURPRISE AND THE NEW SOVIET THREAT IN EUROPE.(U)
1977 W S MCPEAK

UNCLASSIFIED NL

1 OF 1
AD A 047751



END
DATE FILMED
9-80
DTIC

AD A047751

2 B.S.

U S ARMY INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES



DDC
RECEIVED
DEC 20 1977
B

STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT

MAJ WILLIAM S. MCPEAK JR.

SURPRISE AND THE NEW SOVIET THREAT IN EUROPE

1977

GARMISCH, GERMANY

APO NEW YORK 09053

AD No.
DDC FILE COPY

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A
Approved for public release;
Distribution Unlimited

(6)

SURPRISE AND THE NEW SOVIET THREAT IN EUROPE

(9) Student research rept.

(10) William S. McPeak, Jr
MAJ USA

(11) Spring, 1977

(12) 49p.

AD A040192

FOREWORD

This research project represents fulfillment of a student requirement for successful completion of the overseas phase of training of the Department of the Army's Foreign Area Officer Program (Russian).

Only unclassified sources are used in producing the research paper. The opinions, value judgments and conclusions expressed are those of the author and in no way reflect official policy of the United States Government; Department of Defense; Department of the Army; Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff of Intelligence; or the United states Army Institute for Advanced Russian and East European Studies.

Interested readers are invited to send their comments to the Commander of the Institute.

ROLAND LAJOIE
LTC, MI
Commander

SUMMARY

In this paper, the author examines the historical use of surprise by the Red Army and its application as an integral part of contemporary Soviet military thought. Also discussed is the changing balance of combat power in Europe and the resulting increased potential for a successful Soviet/Pact offensive in that theater.

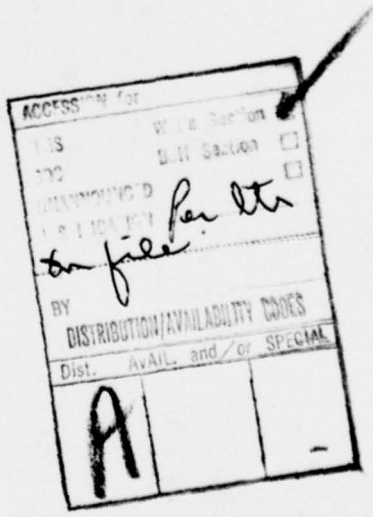


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forward	ii
Summary	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction	1
Recent Soviet Military History and Surprise	3
Tactical Use of Surprise: Training and Techniques	8
The Soviet View of the Achievement of Surprise By the Use of Nuclear Weapons	13
The Current Situation: Soviet/Warsaw Pact Capabilities Versus US/NATO Capabilities in Central Europe	17
Soviet Perceptions of Western Capabilities and Intentions	24
Conclusions	30
Footnotes	32
Selected Bibliography	34

INTRODUCTION

In 1976 and 1977, press reports began to increasingly reflect the concern of high ranking NATO officers with respect to the growing Soviet capability to launch a blitzkrieg attack into Central and Western Europe. During this same period, multinational studies and investigations concluded that NATO is ill-prepared to resist such an attack.

The purpose of this paper is to present the argument that the element of surprise has been, is now, and will continue to be the key to Soviet military doctine. On the modern battlefield, the Soviets will unquestionably attempt to achieve surprise in order to gain an initial advantage over their opponent. This paper is designed to illustrate their emphasis upon the use of surprise in their training, doctrine, and military operations. Further, the paper will examine historical precedents to contemporary warfare. Soviet perceptions of the likelihood of future opponents using surprise are also examined. Soviet military capabilities in Central Europe will be discussed against a background of shortcomings and deficiencies in the forces fielded by NATO. This discussion is presented with the objective of illustrating how the military imbalance between the alliances impacts upon the potential for the initiation of a surprise attack.

Finally, the author will present his conclusion that, in view of Soviet capabilities and NATO weaknesses, a surprise attack by Warsaw Pact forces will be the method used to initiate hostilities in the event of a future European war.

"Surprise lies more or less at the foundation of all undertakings, for without it superiority at the decisive point is really not conceivable... When it is successful to a high degree, confusion and broken courage in the enemy's ranks are the consequences..."

Karl von Clausewitz

"...it is necessary to try to take the enemy by surprise"

V.I. Lenin

"Soviet forces deployed in Eastern Europe now possess the ability to launch a potentially devastating conventional attack in Central Europe with little warning."

Senator Sam Nunn

RECENT SOVIET MILITARY HISTORY AND SURPRISE

The attention given by the Soviets to the element of surprise is easily understood if one recalls the incredible success enjoyed by the Nazis on June 22, 1941, when they launched "Operation Barbarossa" against the USSR. The Germans executed one of the greatest large-scale surprise attacks of all time by employing a combination of superb military planning and deceitful diplomacy. By convincing Stalin that in no case would Germany initiate an attack against Russia without first delivering an ultimatum, Hitler successfully caught the Soviets unprepared. The extent of surprise attained by the Germans can be partially appreciated by reviewing the initial aircraft losses: On the first day alone, 1,811 Russian aircraft were destroyed - at least 1,484 on the ground. Only 35 German aircraft were lost. This triumph of surprise was the greatest single day's victory in the history of military aviation.[1] Bitter experiences such as these are not easily forgotten. The Soviets are determined to never again be surprised on such a scale. At the same time, the lesson of the effectiveness of such a strike was not lost upon the Soviets. Later, during the course of the war, they had a chance to repay the Germans in kind on several occasions. One of the more memorable Soviet operations was initiated on 19 November, 1942, when the Red Army smashed over into the offensive at Stalingrad and proceeded, within five days, to seize a bridge over the Don and thus close a noose around 22 German divisions. The

Soviets had not waited for the enemy to make a fatal blunder, but had achieved this stunning operation by actively protecting the concept of the counteroffensive from German intelligence. This was accomplished by the heavy use of camouflage, night movements of troops and material, and strict communications security. Final, official approval of the creation of a new South-Western front was not granted by Supreme Command General Headquarters until the end of October. Front commanders knew of the existence of the plan but were not allowed to participate in its preparation. Until the first part of November, in fact, their mission remained the defense of Stalingrad. The chief of the General Staff issued a special directive strictly forbidding correspondence and telephone conversations concerning preparations for the offensive. Only verbal orders were given. By concentrating troops in an area opposing the Nazi Army Group Center, the Soviets forced the Germans to shift 12 divisions away from the actual planned main line of Soviet advance.

Soviet military historians attribute a major portion of the success of the operation to the fact that powerful concen trations of forces were able to be hidden along the main lines of advance of armies and fronts. The simultaneous breakthrough of seven sectors of the 400 kilometer front stunned the Germans. The degree of surprise was enhanced by the fact that among the forces were three tank and two mechanized corps. This allowed rapid exploitation of early successes. Many combat operations

conducted by the Soviets in 1941, and 1942, enjoyed success due, primarily, to the achievement of surprise by passive means: limited access to the concept and preparations of an operation, extensive use of camouflage, and secret concentration of forces. During the period 1943-1945, however, the Soviets were forced to revise their methods of operation due to the fact that the Germans had begun to organize a deeply echeloned defense. Breaking through such defenses called for concentrations of huge strike forces on narrow sectors of the front. The problems of hiding these forces in such narrow sectors became all but impossible, and their discovery would make Soviet intentions obvious to the Germans. In order to achieve the necessary degree of surprise, then, the Soviets had to mount aggressive operations to divert enemy reconnaissance and cause dispersal of his forces.[2]

The Byelorussian Campaign, conducted in the Summer-Autumn of 1944, was characterized by the measures used to divert the enemy's attention from the Red Army's main thrust. On 3 May, 1944, the General Staff ordered the Third Ukrainian Front to begin operational camouflage measures. The command showed false concentrations of eight infantry and two artillery divisions, a tank corps and logistical services. Troops arrived at four railway stations, emplacements were dug, dummy tanks, artillery pieces, aircraft supply depots, and radio stations were set up. All these areas received air cover. Eight corps of long range air assets were ordered to support the offensive in Byelorussia in order to help maintain the appearance of an actual buildup prior to a major offensive.

Five of six tank armies remained in their assigned areas of opearation, and German intelligence missed the withdrawal of the 5th Guards Tank Army to the zone of the Third Byelorussian Front. Large reconnaissance in force operations were conducted in seven of eleven fronts. The Third Byelorussian Front received 350-380 troop trains in 19 days. These movements were made at night or during periods of poor visibility. No vehicle convoys were allowed during daylight hours, and tank and mechanized units were held in areas located 50-100 kilometers from the front. The charade was strengthened by the continuation of defensive preparations. Instructions on defensive operations were disseminated to the troops and even newspapers published articles on the subject. False movements of troops and dummy equipment were made from the front to rear areas. Commanders' reconnaissance was conducted in groups of 2-3 men and the commanders were dressed as infantry privates.

It must be noted that the Nazis did establish the numbers of the troops in the fronts but failed to correctly assess the Soviet reserves in depth. Even in June, when concentrations of troops and artillery movements were detected, the Germans continued to believe that the main blow would be directed elsewhere and that the Byelorussian Front was merely a diversion.

On 23 June, 1944, the Soviets struck, and the extent of the surprise can be illustrated by the fact that, after only 1o days, the Red Army had broken through a strategic enemy front in a 500 km zone. They had advanced 250 km and had

destroyed or encircled the majority of the German 3rd Tank Army and the 4th and 9th Combined-Arms Armies.[3]

The foregoing examples of the Soviet employment of surprise during World War II are heavily drawn upon as examples of the tactic to be studied by Soviet commanders. John Erickson, a noted Western analyst of Soviet military affairs, holds the following view:

> ".....the Soviet Manchurian Campaign in 1945, closely approaches in style and scope what the Soviet command presently envisages in the way of high speed ground operations ... the Far Eastern Campaign is a much more realistic "model" than the majority of the operations in the European Theatre during the period 1941-1945." 4

The Japanese, while expecting an attack after the Soviets had abrogated the neutrality treaty in April, 1945, had no inkling of when the attack would come. They began to concentrate their forces on the most likely approaches for an attack. They studies their maps and became convinced that the blow would come from Mongolia.

The Soviets, meanwhile, were determined to make a deep, fast moving thrust in order to cut off any escape by the Japanese forces. The decision was made to conduct three converging attacks and to employ a tank army for shock and speed. By crossing almost 100 km of desert and a small mountain range, this huge armored force succeeded in catching the Japanese unawares and unprepared.

Again the Soviets had proved to be masters at attaining surprise. Even before the operation, they had taken steps to ensure success. The Soviet Army commanders assigned to the operation were brought into the area disguised as lower ranking officers. All tickets were "sold out" at railway stations enroute to the area of the coming battle to prevent passengers from entraining and discovering the size of the military movement in progress. Outgoing mail from troops was prohibited and they were not advised as to their destination. Finally, to enhance the possibilities of achieving surprise, the month of August - a period of heavy rains in the area - was chosen for the attack.[5]

The Soviets apparently are willing to go to any length to gain an initial advantage in a battle. In the past this willingness to expend great effort in order to create an elaborate subterfuge or demonstration has brought them success. There is no reason to believe that, with the addition of a degree of sophistication, this tactic will not enjoy a measure of success on the contemporary battlefield.

TACTICAL USE OF SURPRISE: TRAINING AND TECHNIQUES

> "Only a deep knowledge of the patterns of combat and capabilities of combat equipment and weapons, initiative and swiftness of actions, and foresight into the possible developments of events permit a podrazdeleniye commander to take full advantage of the ageless and strongest weapon for achieving victory in combat: Surprise." 6

The Soviets, having had no appreciable combat experience since World War II, are forced to draw upon that war for lessons learned and examples of successful surprise tactics. While admitting that the modern battlefield had greatly changed, the Soviets apparently place great value on their World War II experience and continue to instruct their troops in the methods of applying that experience. As was mentioned earlier, from these examples Western observers can gain insight into probable tactics that will be employed by the Soviets on the battlefields of the future.

It must be noted, however, that the officers and men receiving these historical examples also receive a warning. They are taught to avoid the pitfall of "mechanical repetition" of the previous methods of achieving surprise. It is pointed out to them that the enemy has also doubtlessly studied successful tactics of the Red Army of World War II and has since developed countermeasures to them.

General-Major V.G. Reznichenko, leader of the author's collective of the M.V. Frunze Military Academy and noted Soviet military writer, maintains that achievement of surprise depends to a high degree upon the level of training of commanders. This includes their knowledge of enemy tactics, their ability to make rapid and accurate situation assessments and their creativeness and initiative in exploiting mistakes made by the enemy. It is also stressed in military publications that Soviet commanders must constantly and aggressively take measures to prevent the enemy from conducting surprise operations against them. Continuous reconnaissance, security,

and combat readiness coupled with the ability to take immediate countermeasures are touted as the best means of denying the enemy the use of surprise.[7]

In "The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics", Col. V.Y. Savkin, a widely read Soviet military authority, has devoted considerable time and attention to the element of surprise. He maintains that, "The experience of the last war showed once again that, with all else being equal, surprise combat actions make it possible to achieve the greatest results with a minimum expenditure of forces, means, effort, and time."[8]

Savkin points out that, as more modern means of conducting warfare become available, the opportunities for greater exploitation of the surprise attack have increased. He goes on to illustrate the differences between the World Wars in terms of such an exploitation. As an example, a breach in the enemy's defense could be exploited to a much greater degree during the last war by rushing large armored forces through the break and thereby expanding and deepening the thrust. (During the First World War, the means to conduct such an exploitation - large armored and mechanized forces - did not exist.) Savkin goes on to make a point of addressing other advantages to be gained in such a breakthrough by the employment of nuclear weapons. This subject will be addressed elsewhere in this paper.

A recurring theme in Soviet military publications regarding surprise is the advantages to be gained from a

sudden attack. Among those frequently listed are: immediate and advantageous change in correlation of forces, lowering of the enemy's combat capabilities, panic and loss of morale, loss of control and subsequent disorganization. As a probable result of these factors, timely and productive countermeasures are difficult to execute leading to hasty, ill-conceived attempts to regain control and freedom of action. New combat missions will be assigned to troops under conditions dictated by the perpetrator of the surprise attack resulting in countermeasures that have little chance of success.[9]

> "The desire for surprise has begun to permeate all decisions for the conduct of operations and battles. In all cases, the goals pursued by our troops in an operation or battle, the directions and time of attack, the composition of forces and means to be used, and methods of operations must be unexpected for the enemy." 10

The Soviets obviously recognize major advances in non-nuclear weapons development since World War II. They also realize the potential of these weapons for delivery of surprise attacks against the enemy. At the same time, however, they understood that the chances of one side or the other keeping these weapons secret for any length of time are slight, Therefore, other means must be explored in addition to weapons development to achieve surprise. One means mentioned in the Soviet press involves the secret positioning of large numbers of forces, weapons, and equipment on selected primary axes so as to achieve surprise by their unexpected mass employment.

Secondly, surprise may be gained through the innovative

and creative use of weapons systems. To be more accurate, the use of a weapon in a role other than that for which it was designed. U.S. Forces in Vietnam employed this tactic by such inoovative measures as the use of the "Dusters" and "Quad 50" air defense weapons against troops and other ground targets. Additionally, it was found that the M-72 LAW anti-tank weapon was very effective when used against snipers.

A third means of executing a surprise attack can be found in the creative and original organization of forces for combat tasks. Also the choice of unexpected axes of attack, massing of forces at unlikely areas for a breakthrough, and unusual methods of employing preparation fires can result in success.

Soviet military thought also subscribes to a highly controlled system of fire. Unexpected fire preparations, fire traps and surprise fire strikes can have devastating effect on the enemy, precipitating panic and loss of control among his forces. Engineer obstacles can be used in conjunction with natural terrain features to channelize an enemy into relatively confined areas to enhance the shock effect of such unexpected fires.

Another major theme in Soviet military publications is the exhortation that surprise must be actively pursued. Waiting for circumstances to present themselves for use in the achievement of surprise is to often lose the initiative in a combat environment. The use of fires and obstacles, as mentioned above, can contribute greatly to forcing the enemy to make mistakes that can be exploited by the execution of surprise combat operations. At the same time, commanders and

troops are expected to be constantly alert to changes in the situation or errors and miscalculations committed by the enemy which may open up new options or possibilities of striking the enemy with a surprise attack. Once surprise is attained, resources must be fully allocated and utilized in order to press the advantage gained.

The Soviets take note of the close relationship that exists between the tempo of an attack and the opportunities for achieving surprise. The speed and decisiveness of an operation is often of more consequence than numerical superiority. In other words, the higher the rate or tempo of attack, the greater chance of surprising the enemy.

Another important factor to be considered when attempting to surprise the enemy is the conduct of night operations. Moving troops into attack positions under the cover of darkness is certainly not new but, if undetected, extremely effective when launching an attack. The defender is often confused, has difficulty in orienting his defense, and is forced to react to the initiative of the attacking force. By successfully executing such a surprise night attack, inferior forces may often seize objectives suffering only minimal losses.

While the Soviets enjoyed great success in Manchuria during the rainy season, they may be more prone to conducting night attacks rather than during periods of inclement weather. The primary reason for this belief is that the same factors inhibiting the defender's actions will also inhibit the

attacker. The number of offensive operations conducted during periods of darkness by the Soviets while on maneuver would indicate that they plan to make use of that training if the need arises.

THE SOVIET VIEW OF THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SURPRISE BY THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

> "The wide surprise employment of nuclear weapons and the various means of delivery will be one of the characteristic features of future operations and battles in a nuclear war. The sides will attempt to employ this weapon against important objectives at any time." 11

Accepting the fact that secret ground force mobilization presents a basic but formidable problem to be overcome by an attacker, the Soviets have attributed no small degree of importance to the relationship of nuclear weapons employment and surprise attack. There are several factors that define the importance of this relationship: First, taking advantage of a nuclear strike and the resultant panic and confusion of the enemy is much easier than exploiting a large-scale surprise attack executed by conventional forces. Secondly, large concentration of forces are obviated by the use of nuclear weapons and, therefore, the direction or target of the attacking forces may be withheld from the enemy for a longer period of time. Finally, an instantaneous and advantageous correlation of forces can be established thereby freeing assets for employment in other areas of the attack.

Keeping in mind the virtually complete mechanization of the Soviet ground forces, it is rather apparent that they are particularly well suited to exploit nuclear breakthrough tactics against a defending enemy. As Col. A.A. Siderenko, Doctor of Military Science and faculty member at the Frunze Military Academy notes:

> "The complete motorization and high mechanization of the ground forces provide the opportunity to exploit the results of nuclear strikes quickly, to attack the enemy from the march right behind them, advance swiftly into the depth, shifting efforts from one direction to another in short times when necessary, accomplishing bold, close, and deep envelopments, and inflicting surprise blows on the enemy from different directions." 12

The Soviets assess foreign military thought (primarily that of U.S. and Western Europe) very carefully with the understandable aim of trying to ascertain at which point in combat certain tactics are likely to be employed. Sidorenko notes that, "It is believed (by the West) that the side which first employs nuclear weapons with surprise can predetermine the outcome of the battle in his favor."[13]

In discussing U.S. ground force capabilities, Siderenko gives considerable attention to nuclear artillery. His observation, after considering that possible reinforcements to the artillery assets of a U.S. division could bring the number of 155 mm howitzers up to 116-134 nuclear delivery means, follows: "It is completely obvious that the successful conduct of the offensive is unthinkable without the timely and

dependable neutralization and destruction of these means."[14]

As evidenced above, the combat task assigned great priority by the Soviets is the destruction of the enemy's means of launching a nuclear attack. This destruction is to be completed immediately after the discovery of the site. There is to be no "accumulation" of targets prior to destruction as was practiced in World War II. The elimination of any nuclear potential cannot be delayed.

Armored and mechanized units, possibly assisted by airborne or airmobile elements, will be assigned the primary responsibility of breaking through enemy defenses, locating and destroying nuclear delivery systems. They are to avoid being engaged in extended battles and to attack sites by surprise, destroying weapons, crews, and means of communication by direct fire.

The basic method for initiating an offensive in a war conducted under nuclear conditions is from the march. This allows a certain measure of security from nuclear weapons attack as the forces are not concentrated in a holding area before crossing the FEBA. This method also greatly enhances the possibility of achieving surprise.[15]

Some Soviet tacticians have stated that modern combat is, essentially, nuclear combat. This does not mean that the combined arms concept has been discarded, (quite the opposite as will later be discussed), but simply states that the employment of nuclear weapons will play a decisive role in combat. They also point out that the nature of combat

activity will, obviously, be changed under nuclear conditions. Conventional forces are to be used in the rapid exploitation of the aftereffects of nuclear weapon employment. Combat tasks will be altered to account for such results of a nuclear strike as drastically reduced time needed for breakthrough. Finally, and probably most important, results of a nuclear strike will become immediately apparent and decisive.

Obviously, no one, perhaps including the Soviets themselves, knows at what point nuclear weapons would be employed in a conflict. It is noted by some observers that the Soviets may subscribe to the view that once the nuclear threshold has been crossed, the result can only be escalation to general nuclear war. If this is, in fact, their belief, then the rapid increase of their conventional ground forces in Central Europe over the past few years could be viewed as particularly ominous. This will be discussed against the background of Warsaw Pact-NATO forces capabilities in Europe.

THE CURRENT SITUATION; SOVIET/WARSAW PACT CAPABILITIES VERSUS US/NATO CAPABILITIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE

The discussion of the changing military balance in Europe has been growing in intensity over the past two or three years but came to a head in 1976. In that year, an increase in the number of articles discussing the apparent shift in military power could be noted in Western military publications. NATO officials were being quoted with some regularity on their generally pessimistic

views with repect to the Alliance's capability to deal with the increased threat. Even General Alexander Haig, Supreme NATO Commander, in a speech before the U.S. Army Association in October, 1976, admitted to deficiencies in NATO. He discussed shortfalls in the areas of readiness, deployment and inter-operability of forces and reinforcement in a time of crisis.[17]

There are of course, those that feel that the apparent shift in military balance in Europe is neither of particular consequence nor cause for alarm. The old argument of hawkish generals pushing a parochial viewpoint designed to increase the military budget as congressional deliberations near each fiscal year, is a specious one at best.

In the author's opinion, an examination of relative capabilities of the opposing military alliances is an integral part of the discussion of the use of surprise. The reason is immediately apparent: the effect of a surprise offensive will be felt to a much greater degree by an adversary that is not fully prepared to react to such a contingency.

In a Newsweek article describing the imbalance between NATO and Warsaw Pact Forces, Armand De Borchgrave cites a high ranking NATO official as revealing that, if the facts of the situation were to be made public, widespread panic could be the result.

Classified computer-aided studies reportedly show that the state of European security is far worse than the public realizes.

The situation is such that a NATO tank division commander has let it be known that he thinks the Soviets could reach the Rhine in a matter of 48 hours.[18]

Against this background, in October and November, 1976, Senators Sam Nunn and Dewey Bartlett visited top ranking officials of NATO. The purpose of their trip was to examine the current status of NATO in relation to the Soviet-Warsaw Pact threat in Central Europe. Their findings, which were published in the Congressional Record, corroborate and, to a degree, bring together the major points of the debate on the current NATO/Pact military balance in Europe. One of the most important findings to be published, as a result of the Nunn-Bartlett trip, is the assessment that conventional Soviet forces now facing West Germany have the ability to launch a surprise attack with as little as a few days warning.

The present NATO strategy is to deter Pact agression through both nuclear and non-nuclear forces. Taking into account the apparent Soviet attitude toward use of nuclear weapons, as was cited above, they most likely will opt for the initiation and conduct of a non-nuclear attack. If this should be the case, then the strategy of "flexible response" loses credibility. Since it is extremely unlikely that the western powers would first employ nuclear weapons. If this should prove to be the case, as many observers believe, then NATO forces are left with one option:

repelling an attack by means of conventional forces alone. Current revelations and indications are that NATO does not have this capability in the event of little or no advance warning.

At the basis of the "flexible response" strategy lies the concept of "forward defense", which entails fighting a defensive battle as far eastward as possible on NATO territory. The NATO forces are committed to the "forward defense" doctrine. However, in order for this doctrine to be viable and credible, there must be adequate forces deployed in positions to carry it out. If an invasion is begun with little or no warnings and the maldeployed forces of NATO cannot reach their assigned forward defense areas in time, the doctrine is next to useless. In fact, unless there is enough warning for considerable reinforcements to be mobilized and deployed from U.S., British and Canadian resources, the doctrine fails. As the Nunn report states:

> "It is doubtful whether NATO's present covering forces possess sufficient firepower to impose a substantial delay upon a highly mobile armored juggernaut, estimated to contain as many as 58 Pact divisions." 19

Failure to contain or significantly slow down the first echelon of the invading force would have serious strategic implications:

> "At West Germany's waist, the theater now is barely 130 miles wide.... maneuver room

> for armies is at a premium.... most U.S. supplies, including ammunition, are stored within a 30 mile radius of Kaiserslautern. The first sharp Soviet surge could sever friendly supply lines, which radiate from Bremerhaven, Rotterdam, and Antwerp, then run closely behind and parallel to the prospective front."20

However, if NATO forces were to slow down the tempo of a Pact blitzkrieg, the situation would probably improve somewhat as reinforcements were brought up. If such were to be the case and the sides had not yet crossed the nuclear threshold, what would the Soviets be doing? They would also be bringing in fresh divisions. There are approximately 90 Soviet and non-Soviet active divisions throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union that are immediately available for combat." Another 90 divisions could be deployed over the long term, leaving in place 40 in the Eastern USSR and Mongolia.[21]

With respect to NATO reinforcements (to come primarily from the United States, Canada and Britain) being quickly infused into the battle, the outlook is rather bleak. In the case of the British Army, any buildup of the Army of the Rhine requires Parliamentary approval. U.S. forces, in order to deploy in the face of a surprise attack, would be moved by air,and U.S. strategic airlift assets are, unfortunately, inadequate.

Another NATO shortcoming raises its head at this point. There are likely to be insufficiencies and shortages of ammunition, transportation, and other war material to greet the newly arrived reinforcements. According to De Borchgrave,

computer studies of the NATO exercise Autumn Forge, conducted in the fall of 1976, showed that many units would have exhausted ammunition supplies after only half a day of intense fighting. Soviets reportedly maintain a two to three week supply - sufficient to allow them to press an intense war for that period of time. Even with armor losses to allied anti-tank defenses amounting to 20 to 30 percent, the study shows that the Soviets could still smash through such defenses in less than 12 hours.[22]

Add to the above cited problems of NATO the fact that the Soviets have made a quantum jump not only in quantitative war-fighting potential, but a qualitative jump as well. Group of Soviet Forces Germany now has the T-72 tank (the Pact has an almost three to one edge in armor over NATO). The BMP infantry combat vehicle has been added to the majority of Soviet mechanized infantry divisions. There has been a shift from towed to self-propelled artillery. An impressive inter-related tactical air defense system has been deployed. Finally, the Soviets have developed tactics such as the use of massed artillery fires to keep wire-guided missile controllers under cover in order to neutralize or reduce the effectiveness of many of NATO's new generation anti-tank defenses.[23]

To list the complete range of shortcomings, and deficiencies in NATO forces would comprise a study in itself. Aside from being outside the scope of this paper, this has already been done by the Nunn report.

How could a surprise attack be initiated by Pact forces? Mobilization of forces during periods of international tension and their subsequent movement into areas within striking distance of likely targets would, of course, be an obvious tip-off to the enemy that an attack was in the offing. If, however, these forces were already stationed in close proximity to their assigned targets, then the "obvious tip-off" is lost. It would be relatively simple to bring forces up to full combat readiness if little or no movement outside established cantonment areas were necessary. This is very possible in the areas along the inter-German border which has been classified by the Soviets as being "off limits" to allied military liaison mission personnel. Much of this area is heavily forested and even with sophisticated intelligence equipment, the level of readiness of units located therein could be very difficult to ascertain.

Additionally, it would be unlikely that the Soviets would simply come rolling out of their cantonment areas and launch a surprise attack. It would appear much more likely that the strike would be launched as part of a Pact exercise. A large-scale maneuver would easily account for large movements of troops, combat formations and advanced states of readiness. If such an exercise were to be announced and conducted during a period of lessened tensions in the theater, an offensive move suddenly initiated by maneuver units and supported by area forces and pre-positioned war material would almost certainly achieve a certain degree of surprise.

However, merely recognizing signals or indications of impending hostiliites (if indeed there are any) is inadequate. Returning for a moment to the Russian campaign in Manchuria:

> "The Japanese badly misjudged Soviet intentions, and by so doing became victims of Soviet efforts to gain the initiative through surprise. This is a key point. The U.S. Army's tactical doctrine tends to stress enemy capabilities as an estimate guide, studiously avoiding the idea of assessing enemy intentions." 24

Intentions are admittedly difficult to ascertain, much less prove to a degree that would call for military initiatives. The purpose of this paper is not to ascribe intentions to the Soviets. The objective, as has been stated, is to present the view that the Soviets are masters at exploiting an advantage and there is an increased threat in a situation where they feel that they have such an advantage.

SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF WESTERN CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS

> "Soviet Military Doctrine proceeds from the assumption that the imperialists are preparing a surprise nuclear attack against the USSR and other socialist countries. At the same time they (imperialists) consider the possibility of waging military operations with conventional weapons and the possibility of these operations escalating into military actions involving the use of nuclear missile weapons. Therefore, the chief and main task of the Armed Forces consists in being constantly ready to repel a sudden attack of the enemy in any form, to foil his criminal intentions, no matter what means he might use." 25

In the post war period, the United States embarked upon a policy of Soviet containment. This not only led the Soviets into a situation where they felt rather inferior in terms of attaining superpower status, but also to no small degree they began to feel threatened. That they still feel threatened to an extent is evident in their press. Soviet officials constantly decry statements from Western sources that imply Chinese Western power agreements on limitations of Soviet hegemony in any form by any means. As the above quotation would indicate, the Soviets are particularly concerned that a surprise attack could be launched against them.

In commenting on the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Soviet military analysts attributed the successful Israeli pre-emptive strikes to U.S./West German inspiration. They also concluded that the Israeli "lightning war" would become the "acme of contemporary atrategy".[26]

Col. Siderenko, in an article written for Red Star in September, 1967, openly advocated pre-emptive nuclear strikes in order to deny the enemy first use of his nuclear weapons.[27]

The actual existence of a NATO-Western threat to the Soviet bloc is, frankly, beside the point. What is important and what must be recognized by Western analysts is the fact and manner of Soviet-Pact preception of such a threat. As a Polish officer recently observed, "As long as NATO has a (West) German face, we must stand ready."[28]

Post-war growth and development of West Germany has had a significant effect on Soviet attitudes toward the West. The fact of the Federal Republic's continued existence and its rags-to-riches climb from a war-devastated, devided country to a world economic power has been a source of irritation and more to the Soviets. The fact that the old foe has rebuilt its army into one of the most capable and efficient military forces in the free world is perceived by the Soviets as a major factor that must be considered in any plans for European strategy. The hatred for the Germans still exists. It is alive and it receives constant and official nurturing Children in primary schools receive instruction on the evils of fascism and imperialism alike. The imperialist wears a top hat decorated with stars and stripes and the fascist still wears a Nazi helmet adorned with a swastika.

While true that much of the Soviet propaganda is ignored by their citizens, enough of the "Western Threat" variety is absorbed to influence attitudes. Western visitors to the USSR are often confronted by "the man in the street" and asked to defend his country's "war-like"position with respect to the Soviet Union.

Compounding the effect of propaganda has been the upsurge in the Soviet civil defense program in recent years. It is not difficult to convince a nation that a threat of nuclear war exists when the government spends enormous amounts of money on a country-wide civil defense program.

> "This 'survivability' program, includimg evacuation schemes, shelter buildings, dispersal of industry and stockpiling, is designed to lower the casualty rate to an 'acceptable' level of some 7 million-12 million (less than the gross Soviet casualty rate for World War II, it might be noted)," 29

The Soviets perceive civil defense to be an extremely significant factor in their global strategy. Realizing that the country that is most prepared to withstand a nuclear exchange in terms of survivability of an industrial base and large segments of the population (work force) would "win" such an exchange. If, when the above cited acceptable losses can be fairly well guaranted, then perhaps the unthinkable becomes somewhat less so.

At any rate, the Soviets, even after assuring themselves that they could withstand the possible consequences of their global adventures, must still consider other factors. Of primary consideration, in the author's opinion, would be whether the objective gained would be worth the risks. In other words, what would be the likely reaction of the West, particularly the United States? Here, the Soviets are presented with difficult factor to assess.

In a study conducted by the Stanford Research Institute, the following inference was made from Soviet perceptions.

> "There is good reason to believe that Moscow entertains a realistic and prudent appreciation of U.S. military potential. They recognize that policies change with U.S. administrations and that

> such a fact makes mid-and long-range analysis of U.S. intentions a difficult proposition nor (sic) are the Soviets entirely confident that the U.S. leadership will always act rationally in a crisis of nuclear proportions."30

This factor of questionable rationality is, quite possibly, a source of great consternation to the Soviets in their analytical projections of possible U.S. reaction to a given provocation. It may be assumed that the "Mayaguez" operation created an atmosphere of surprise in Soviet military operations centers. U.S. reaction to seizure of the vessel could be characterized by many observers as being rather strong when compared with past events of similar nature, eg. the Pueblo incident and the shootdown of the EC-121.

In short, it may well be the very nature of the U.S. national character that presents the Soviets with one of their major difficulties when assessing reaction to their politico-military initiatives. This factor may also be an major inhibiting influence on Soviet offensive planning.

Another major consideration that would necessarily be studied by the Soviets would be the likelihood of overcoming U.S./NATO defensive intelligence means. Spy satellites, electronic surveillance, etc. have extended a range of intelligence gathering to such a degree that the achievement of surprise is going to be an extremely difficult proposition in the future.

Nevertheless, by use of disinformation tactics, diplomacy, available technology, and creative use of weapons systems, surprise, as an objective of combat operations, may still be successfully attained.

CONCLUSIONS

While certainly not predicting nor suggesting that the Soviet/Pact forces are currently planning a surprise offensive in Central Europe, the author would, nevertheless, point out that they do have the capability to launch such an operation.

If the Soviets perceive that war is inevitable or necessary to offset Western gains in the European Theater or elsewhere, they will be the first to strike. They believe that pre-emptive attacks (particularly nuclear strikes) sharply limit the enemy's options and capabilities and create an atmosphere of confusion and panic that is most advantageous to the attacker.

With or without the involvement of nuclear weapons, however, the Soviets are geared towards a short, violent war in Europe. The more time NATO has to prepare for such a war, the more Soviet/Pact chances of success decrease. Therefore, it would appear that this factor, when added to the transformation of Pact forces to a highly mobile fighting machine, points to surprise as being a basic and integral part of Soviet strategy in Europe.

If, as discussed earlier, NATO's flexible response (with respect to conventional forces) has been reduced in effectiveness by the Soviet build-up, then the Alliance must rely solely on a nuclear deterrent. The potential limitations of such deterrent are as numerous as the potential capabilities. The decision making process which members of the Alliance would have to embark upon before issuing the order to employ nuclear

weapons could very possibly delay that decision until such use would be ineffective or pointless. Even responding to overt, offensive actions by the Pact could prove to be difficult. In the 1973 Mid-East War, the Israelis were undecided on the question of whether or not to mobilize until it became clear that an Arab attack was imminent. If one nation has that difficulty, it is not difficult to imagine the difficulties an alliance of nations might have.

Finally, the question remains of whether the NATO forces could withstand a surprise blitzkrieg offensive initiated by Pact forces. Optimistic appraisals of NATO capabilities by some Defense Department officials notwithstanding, the preponderance of hard data (in open sources) indicates that NATO would sorely taxed to repel such an attack.

Western observers must remain alert to an adversary that fully appreciates the advantage to be gained by the use of surprise. The Soviets have not forgotten the bitter lessons of June 22, 1941. Hopefully, the U.S. hasn't forgotten the 7th of December of the same year.

FOOTNOTES

1. Barton Whaley, Codeword Barbarossa, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1973), p. XII.

2. Col Z. Shutov, "Surprise", Soviet Military Review, (December, 1975), p. 54.

3. Ibid., p. 56.

4. John Erickson, "Soviet Military Power," (Royal United Services Institute, London, England, 1971), p. 73.

5. A Survey of "Quick Wins" in Modern War, a survey prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, prepared by the Historical Research and Evaluation Organization, (Dunn Loring, Virginia, October, 1975), pp. 46-55.

6. Maj. Yu. Pivovar, "Vnezapnost V Boi", (Surprise in Combat), Voennyi Vestnik, II (Febraury, 1976), pp. 77-80.

7. V.G. Reznichenko, Taktika (Tactics), (Moskva: Voennyi Izd-Vo, 1966), p. 85.

8. V.Ye. Savkin, Osnovnye Printsipy Operativnogo Iskustva i Taktiki (Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics), (Moskva: Voennoye Izd-Vo, 1972), pp. 304-305.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid, p. 307.

11. Ibid, p. 311-312.

12. Col. A.A.Siderenko, The Offensive, trans. (United States Air Force, 1970), p. 58.

13. Ibid., p. 112.

14. Ibid., p. 132.

15. Ibid, p. 67.

16. Stanford Research Institute, Study of Controlled Conflict - Possibilities and Implications of a Soviet Controlled Conflict, H.A. Twitchell et al, June, 1975, p. 63.

17. Speech delivered by General Alexander Haig, Supreme NATO Commander, 13 October, 1976.

18. Arnaud De Borchhrave, "Nightmare for NATO," Newsweek, (February 7, 1977), p. 12.

19. U.S., Congressional Record, Senate, 95the Congress, 1st Session, (January 25, 1977), Vol. 123, No. 13, "NATO and the New Soviet Threat," Senators Sam Nunn and Dewey Bartlett.

20. Benjamin F. Schmmer, "U.S./Soviet Military Balance," Armed Forces Journal, (May, 1976), p. 24.

21. "USSR, Pact and PRC General Purpose Force Capabilities," Commanders Digest, April 29, 1976, p. 4.

22. De Borchgrave, p. 14.

23. Nunn, loc cit.

24. Harmon L. Eaton, "The Soviet Invasion of Manchuria, 1945, An Analysis of the Element of Surprise", (Unpublished Masters Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, June, 1976), p. 145.

25. S.A. Tyushkevich, N.Ya. Svshko, Ya.S.Dzubi, Marksism-Leninism o Voine i Armii, (Marxism-Leninism on War and Army), (Moskva: Voennoye Izd-Vo, 1968), pp. 350-351.

26. Col. I.Vorobiov, "Boevaya Gotovnost, Kak Eyo Ponimat?" (Combat Readiness, What does it mean?), Krasnaya Zvezda, August 17, 1967, p. 2.

27. Col. A.A.Siderenko, "Vstrechny Boi," (Meeting Engagement), Krasnaya Zvezda. September 27, 1967, pp. 2-3.

28. Personal conversation between U.S. Embassy official, Warsaw, and unnamed Polish Officer, 1976.

29. John Erickson, ""Soviet Military Capabilities," RUSI, (October, 1976), p. 100.

30. Stanford Research Institute Study, p. 66.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Biddle, W.F., Weapons Technology and Arms Control, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972.

2. Brown, Dallas C. Jr. "Conventional Warfare in Europe- The Soviet View", Thesis presented to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, 1974.

3. Burnham, James, "Clearboard to the Rhine", National Review, April 16, 1976.

4. Clark, Alan, Barbarossa - The Russian-German Conflict, 1941-45. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1965.

5. De Borchgrave, Arnaud, "Nightmare for NATO." Newsweek, February 7, 1977.

6. Douglass, Joseph D. Jr., The Soviet Theater Nuclear Offensive. U.S. Air Force: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976.

7. Eaton, Harmon L., "The Soviet Invasion of Manchuria, 1945 - An Analysis of the Element of Surprise." Thesis presented to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, 1976.

8. Efremov, A.E., Evropeiskaya Bezopasnost i Krisis NATO, (European Security and the Crisis of NATO). Moskva: Izd-vo Polit-Lit, 1975.

9. Erickson, John. "Soviet Military Capabilities." Current History, October, 1976.

10. Erickson, John, "Soviet Military Capabilities in Europe." RUSI, March, 1975.

11. Garthoff, Raymond L. The Soviet Image of Future War. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1959.

12. Garthoff, Raymond L. Soviet Military Doctrine. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1953.

13. Goldhamer, Herbert. The Soviet Soldier - Soviet Military Management at the Troop Level. United St-tes Air Force Project Rand, 1975.

14. Gorshkov, S.G. Morskaya Moshch Gosudarstva (Sea Power of the State.) Moskva: Voenizdat, 1976.

15. Haig, Alexander, Genral, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. Speech delivered to U.S.Army Association, October 13, 1976.

16. Herzog, General Chaim, Former Chief, Israeli Military Intelligence, The Middle East War, 1973. Speech given at RUSI, November 6, 1974.

17. Historical Evaluation and Research Organization. A Survey of "Quick Wins" in Modern War. Dunn Loring, Virginia: Historical Evaluation and Research Organization, 1975.

18. Kissinger, Henry A. Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957.

19. Kohler, Foy D.; Harvey, Mose L.; Govre, Leon: Soll, Richard. Soviet Strategy for the Seventies. Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami, 1973.

20. Lomov, N.A. Col-Gen (ed.) Scientific-Technical Progress and the Revolution in Military Affairs. trans. U.S. Air Force: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.

21. Matsulenko, V. "Surprise, How it is Achieved and Its Role." Soviet Military Review, June, 1972.

22. Pivovar, Yu. "Vnezapnost V Boi." (Surprise in Combat), Voennii Vestnik, February, 1976.

23. Record, Jeffrey, Sizing Up the Soviet Army. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1975.

24. Reznichenko, Vasilii G. Taktika (Tactics). Moskva: Voenizdat, 1966.

25. Savkin, V.I. Osnovnie Printsipii Operativnogo Iskustva i Taktiki (Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics). Moskva: Voenizdat, 1972.

26. Schemmer, Benjamin F. "U.S./USSR Military Balance Shifts in Favor of Russia." Armed Forces Journal, April. 1976.

27. Shutov, Z. "Surprise." Soviet Military Review, December, 1975.

28. Siderenko. A.A. The Offensive. (Trans.) U.S. Air Force, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

29. Siderenko, A.A. "Vstrechnii Boi." (Meeting Engagement) Krasnaya Zvezda, September 27, 1967.

30. Sokolovskii, V.D. (ed). Voennaya Strategia (Military Strategy) Moskva: Voenizdat, 1968.

31. Stanford Research Institute. Study of Controlled Conflict - Possibilities and Implications of a Soviet Adoption of Controlled Conflict. Menlo Park, Calif: Stanford Research Institute, 1975.

32. Steed, R.H.C. "NATO: The Naked Truth." London Daily Telegraph, March 26, 1976.

33. Titakov, K. "Vnezapnost - Klych k Pobede." (Surprise-Key to Victory), Voennii Vestnik, No. 8, 1976.

34. Tyushkevich, S. A.; Sushko, N.Ya.; Dzuby, Ya.S. (ed.) Marxism-Leninism o Voine i Armii. (Marxism-Leninism on War and Army). Moskva: Voenizdat, 1968.

35. Unnamed Polish Army Officer. Warsaw, Poland. Conversation, 1976.

36. U.S. Congreee, Senate. NATO and the New Soviet Theat, by Senators Sam Nunn and Dewey Bartlett, Committee on Armed Services. Washington, D.C.: U.S.Government Printing Office, January 25, 1977.

37. USSR, Pact and PRC General Purpose Force Capabilities. Arlington, Virginia: American Force Press Service. April 29, 1976.

38. Vigor, P.H. and Donnelly, C.N. "The Soviet Threat to Europe." RUSI, March, 1976.

39. Von Clausewitz, Karl. On War. trans. O.J. Malthijs Jolles. Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1950.

40. Vorobiov, I. "Voevaya Gotovnost - Kak eyo Ponimat?" (Combat Readiness - What does it mean?) Krasnaya Zvezda, August 17, 1967.

41. Whaley, Barton. Codeword Barbarossa. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973.

42. Wilmot, Richard W.; Davis, James M.; Hutton, C.Powell; Vincent, Joseph F.; "An Examination of the First Use of Nuclear Weapons in the Defense of Western Europe." A group research project presented to the U.S.Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 1975.